

Ask the U.S. Embassy

February 26, 2014

Visa Validity

Question: *“Can someone enter the United States of America in February 2014 and spend two weeks if their visitor’s visa expires in April 2014?”*

Yes! If your visa is valid on the day that you travel, and your passport is still valid for at least six months beyond your intended stay, you are good to go. So, if you plan to travel on February 28, 2014 and leave March 14, 2014, your visa must be valid at least until February 28th, and your passport must be valid at least until September 14, 2014.

A common misconception is that the visa validity indicates how long they can stay in the United States. If a visa is valid, it means that you can travel to the U.S. and present yourself to Customs and Border Protection at the port of entry. The officer at Customs and Border Protection then determines the maximum amount of time you are allowed to stay in the U.S. So, if you have a visitor’s visa that is valid for ten years, that doesn’t mean you can stay in the U.S. for ten years. It means you can use that visa to travel to a port of entry as many times as you want within that ten- year period.

For each trip, the officer at Customs and Border Protection at the port of entry will stamp into your passport the authorized duration date of your stay. If you travel on February 28th, and your visa expires March 1st, for example, but the custom’s officer grants you a maximum stay of six months, you can still stay for your full two week vacation.

Reminder for U.S. Citizens: All U.S. citizens who live outside of the United States and want to vote by absentee ballot must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. For more information, please visit the www.fvap.gov. You may drop off your voting materials with postage affixed at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston or at the U.S. Consular Agencies in Montego Bay and the Cayman Islands for delivery to the United States.